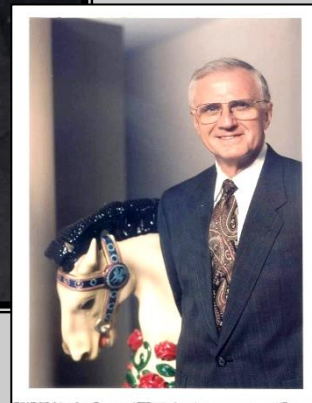


*Memorial Service & Celebration of Life*  
**John Robert Graff**

*March 14, 1936 – December 28, 2023*



*“I will sing of steadfast love, O Lord, forever, with my mouth.  
I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. Your  
steadfast love was established forever, your faithfulness is as  
firm as the heavens.” Psalm 89:1-2*

# ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Albert W. Triolo, *Senior Pastor*

Rev. David Helfrich, *Visiting Pastor*

Christian A. Michaelsen, *Organist*

2:00 PM, February 10, 2024

## PRELUDE

Selections on Organ, including *It is Well with My Soul, Just a Closer Walk with Thee*

## GATHERING

*(Turn to face the Cross at the entrance of the Church)*

P Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all mercy and the God of all consolation, who comforts us in all our sorrows so that we can comfort others in their sorrows with the consolation we ourselves have received from God.

## THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

P When we were baptized in Christ Jesus, we were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

P Eternal God, maker of heaven and earth, who formed us from the dust of the earth, who by your breath gave us life, we glorify you.

**C We glorify you.**

P Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, who suffered death for all humanity, who rose from the grave to open the way to eternal life, we praise you.

**C We praise you.**

P Holy Spirit, author and giver of life, the comforter of all who sorrow, our sure confidence and everlasting hope, we worship you.

**C We worship you.**

P To you, O blessed Trinity, be glory and honor, forever and ever.

**C Amen.**

## GATHERING HYMN, Lift High the Cross

Text: George W. Kitchin, 1827–1912; rev. Michael R. Newbolt, 1874–1956

Music: CRUCIFER, Sydney H. Nicholson, 1875–1947

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*Refrain*

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro - claim till

all the world a - dore his sa - cred name.

1 Come, Chris - tians, fol - low where our cap - tain trod,  
2 All new - born ser - vants of the Cru - ci - fied tree,  
3 O Lord, once lift - ed on the glo - rious tree,  
4 So shall our song of tri - umph ev - er be:

*Refrain*

our king vic - to - rious, Christ, the Son of God.  
bear on their brows the seal of him who died.  
as thou hast prom - ised, draw us all to thee.  
praise to the Cru - ci - fied for vic - to - ry!

## GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

**C And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray. O God of grace and glory, we remember before you today our brother, John. We thank you for giving him to us to know and to love as a companion in our pilgrimage on earth. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see that death has been swallowed up in the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may live in confidence and hope until, by your call, we are gathered to our heavenly home in the company of all your saints; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C Amen.**

## WORD

**A READING FROM LAMENTATIONS (3:22-26), read by Pastor David**

<sup>22</sup>The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,  
his mercies never come to an end;

<sup>23</sup>they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.

<sup>24</sup>“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,  
“therefore I will hope in him.”

<sup>25</sup>The LORD is good to those who wait for him,  
to the soul that seeks him.

<sup>26</sup>It is good that one should wait quietly  
for the salvation of the LORD.

*Following the reading:*

A The word of the Lord.

**C Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM 62:5-8

<sup>5</sup>For God alone I wait in silence;  
truly, my hope is in God.

<sup>6</sup>**God alone is my rock and my salvation,  
my stronghold, so that I shall never be shaken.**

<sup>7</sup>In God is my deliverance and my honor;  
God is my strong rock and my refuge.

<sup>8</sup>**Put your trust in God always, O people,  
pour out your hearts before the one who is our refuge.**

**A READING FROM 2 CORINTHIANS (5:1, 6-10), read by Pastor David**

<sup>1</sup>For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens... <sup>6</sup>So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord — <sup>7</sup>for we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. <sup>10</sup>For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

*Following the reading:*

**A** The word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

#### **REMEMBRANCES**

Chris Graff, *John's Son*

Paul Graff, *John's Brother*

Jakob Wahl, *CEO of International Amusement Park and Attractions*

**A READING FROM REVELATION (21:2-7), read by Pastor David**

<sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

<sup>4</sup>he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

<sup>5</sup>And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup>Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. <sup>7</sup>Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

**A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (14:25-27)**

*Before the Gospel:*

P The Holy Gospel according to John, the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**C Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>25</sup>I have said these things to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup>But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. <sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

*Following the Gospel:*

P The Gospel of the Lord.

**C Praise to you, O Christ.**

**HOMILY**, Pastor Albert

**HYMN OF THE DAY**, *Sung by Edrie Means Weekly*

*How Great Thou Art*

Text: Carl G. Boberg, 1859-1940; tr. and adapt. Stuart K. Hine, 1899-1989

Music: Swedish folk tune; adapt. Stuart K. Hine

**THE APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell.**

**On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting. Amen**

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**, *each petition is followed by:*

P God of mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

## MEAL

### DIALOGUE

P The Lord be with you.

**C And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

**C We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

### THE LORD'S PRAYER, *sung by Edie Means Weekly*

*Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.*

*Ave Maria, Ian Graff, Bass Clarinet*

## SONG AFTER COMMUNION



Lord, now you let your ser - vant go in peace; your word has



been ful - filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which



you have pre - pared in the sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple:



A light to re - veal you to the na - tions and the



glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.



Glo - ry to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the



Ho - ly Spir - it, as it was in the be - gin - ning,



is now, and will be for - ev - er. A - men



## SENDING

### THE COMMENDATION

**P** Let us commend John to the mercy of God, our maker and redeemer. Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant John. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

### BENEDICTION

**P** The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do God's will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in God's sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever.

**C Amen.**

*All are invited to join the family for a reception in the fellowship hall following the service.*

### SENDING HYMN, Now Thank We All Our God

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586–1649; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878  
Music: NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT, Johann Crüger, 1598–1662

*Next Page*

1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices,  
 2 Oh, may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,  
 3 All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,

who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;  
 with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,  
 the Son, and Spirit blest, who reign in highest heaven,

who, from our mothers' arms, has blest us on our way  
 and keep us all in grace, and guide us when perplexed,  
 the one eternal God, whom earth and heav'n adore;

with countless gifts of love, and still is ours to-day.  
 and free us from all harm in this world and the next.  
 for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

## POSTLUDE

Selections on Organ, including *Go, my children, with my blessing, Day Full of Gladness*  
And other selections on Organ

### **John Robert Graff**

**March 14, 1939 – December 28, 2023**

John was born to Ardean and Barbara Graff in Madison, South Dakota on March 14, 1936. He was one of six children in a very close-knit family. He grew up and attended elementary and high school in Clark, South Dakota. He loved school, books, and learning from the very beginning. He also participated in sports and was very musical.

He received his BA degree in Government and History at the University of South Dakota with government and political science as majors. He then attended Indiana University where he received his MA in International Relations. He later received his Juris Doctorate degree from Catholic University in Washington, D.C.

His first job after receiving his MA was back in South Dakota where he worked for the South Dakota Chamber of Commerce. Then, at age 26, he moved to Pierre to become the Executive Director of the Republican State Central Committee. While working in Pierre he met Kay, and they were married on June 11, 1966. Then he had a very brief detour in the academia world and became assistant to the Dean at Northern University in Aberdeen, South Dakota.

Early in 1968, Senator Karl Mundt called John to tell him that he wanted John to move to Washington, D.C. The decision to move to Washington was significant because by this time, son Christopher had been added to the family. However, John had a strong desire to go back to school and get his law degree, so ultimately, they decided to make the journey to DC, and John started his new career as counsel on the Senate Committee of Government Relations. He worked all day on Capitol Hill and attended law school at Catholic University at night. During this time, daughter Andrea also joined the family.

As Senator Mundt's term of office ran out in 1974, it was time once again to reassess careers. The Marriott Corporation hired John to manage their contracts in their New Parks division, which kicked off a long and illustrious career in the park industry. In 1980, a mentor of John asked him if he would be interested in a Director of Government Relations position with the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), as the association would be opening an office in DC. John took the position and became the Director of Government Relations and Legal Counsel to IAAPA in the summer of 1980. He later became the Executive Director of IAAPA in 1984. According to IAAPA, no single

individual has had as much influence in the development of the industry's leading trade association as John. By transcending the barriers of language and culture to expand the influence of the group worldwide, he changed the global landscape of the industry. During his 20-year tenure with IAAPA, John visited more than 400 parks in 60 different countries. John's tenure with the IAAPA was a blessing for the Graff family by expanding their horizons in so many ways and developing many wonderful friendships around the world.

In December of 2001, John retired from the association but continued to volunteer in Give Kids the World in Kissimmee, Florida activities; Peace through Tourism Association; Prison Ministry; and many church activities at St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

John's faith life never wavered nor did his commitment to his Church. He loved the Men's Bible Study each week, enjoyed teaching the adult Sunday School class, was very active in the synod and the activities of the ELCA such as Faith in Daily Life, and was a member of the Task Force on the Study of Ministry for years.

On Thursday, December 28, 2023, John died peacefully. He had fought the good fight and had finished the course. He rests in the arms of God.

He leaves behind his wife Kay Graff; his children Christopher Graff (Shannon) and Andrea Cheseldine; grandchildren Ian and Carter Graff; his sister Bette Gerberding (Carroll), and brother Paul Graff (Carolyn); as well as many loving and helpful nieces and nephews. Preceding him in death are his parents Barb and Ardean Graff; and sisters Ruth Graff, Jayne Lien (Perry), and Judy Folkestad (Glen).

John will be laid to rest in the family plot in the congregational cemetery in Clark, South Dakota in the summer.

Thanks be to God!